



Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman  
November 3, 2009  
H.Res. 867

Madame Speaker. I rise in strong support of H.Res. 867, a resolution standing against further action on the "Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict," also known as the "Goldstone Report."

From its inception, the Gaza report was rooted in an orchestrated campaign to delegitimize Israel. It was commissioned by the UN Human Rights Council, an institution obsessed with condemning Israel. In his response to the Goldstone Report, Michael Posner, the Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, noted that the UNHRC has ordered more reports and held more special sessions on Israel than another country in the world. The Council has also passed more resolutions against Israel than for all 191 other UN members combined and Israel is the only country that is a permanent agenda item at Council meetings.

Those who seek to elevate the Goldstone Report recommendations are advancing a campaign to demonize Israel's soldiers, denounce its democratic institutions, and undermine efforts to move the peace process forward. They feed into a disturbing new wave of anti-Israel discrimination including Arab League efforts to invigorate the Arab boycott against Israel and a recent Bahraini parliament vote to make it illegal for the Kingdom's citizens to have contact with Israelis.

Some opponents of this resolution have suggested that its motivation is to bury the incidents and allegations recorded in the report. This assessment is grossly wrong. Israel is already investigating and prosecuting reported incidents in Gaza and the United States has encouraged the government to expand and intensify its efforts. The integrity of the Israeli military and the Israeli judicial system requires that all credible allegations are thoroughly examined.

What is buried by the Goldstone Report is the suffering Palestinians in Gaza experience every day as hostages to an extremist terror campaign fought by Hamas and fueled by Iran. What is largely ignored is the deliberate efforts of Hamas to launch attacks from civilian areas and the extraordinary efforts Israel took to avoid civilian casualties.

Others have suggested that Israel's cooperation with the "fact finding mission" could have avoided its biased outcome. The reality is that the mission was fated by a sweeping mandate, the inclusion of a judge with admitted prejudice against Israel, and reliance on testimony by individuals largely chosen and at times intimidated by Hamas officials.

As a result, the report calls for the International Criminal Court to consider charges against Israeli military leaders and politicians and supports universal jurisdiction for countries to bring charges against Israeli soldiers and diplomats wherever they travel. Yet, Hamas leaders and the terrorist state sponsors who sparked the Gaza conflict with thousands of rockets face no sanction at all.

While President Obama works to achieve a breakthrough in the peace process, continued action on the Goldstone Report only pushes the parties farther apart. As Israel begins to implement unprecedented policies to constrain future settlement growth, the virulent atmosphere generated by the Goldstone Report can only serve to poison hope for progress.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote for H.Res. 867. I commend the Obama Administration for its continued work to oppose any endorsement or further consideration of the report and its recommendations.